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Looking Back: Legacies of Women Art Writers

Meaghan Clarke

Pictorial representations of women in galleries and museums, clutching a catalogue, abound in the nineteenth century. Hilary Fraser has emphasized the importance of women to the development of art writing and its increasing professionalism in the nineteenth century. This article examines the interrelated art historical processes of looking, reading, and writing through the professional trajectories of three very different art writers: Emily Dilke (E. F. S. Pattison) (1840–1904) was a specialist in eighteenth-century French art; Gertrude Campbell (1857–1911) was a London-based art reviewer; and Christiana Herringham (1852–1929) developed technical expertise on the early Renaissance. It argues that 'looking back' at the intellectual and material legacies of these writers gives insight into how these women worked as professionals inside and outside the museum.

Pictorial representations of women occupying galleries and museums abound in the nineteenth century. The prevalence of women in these spaces attests to their historical significance as visitors. The precise details of these visits are quite varied in the visual record: some suggest a breezy stroll through a large gallery; others indicate sketching, reflective contemplation, or animated discussion. This example from the *Art Journal* is suggestive of some sort of intrigue at an exhibition opening (*Fig. 1*). Like the well-dressed woman in the foreground of this image, figures are often depicted clutching an open catalogue or possibly a notebook. This gallery accessory suggests a combined practice of looking and reading. Conventional accounts of women gallery-goers position them as passive, superficial occupiers of these fashionable spaces. However, the central figure of the woman, seemingly focused on the painting in front of her, suggests possibilities for more engaged looking. In this context the wider historical record evidences the cultural agency of women visitors. Women held multiple, active, professional roles in exhibition culture. They were looking, reading, and indeed writing about art.[1] In *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman*, Hilary Fraser emphasizes the importance of women to the development of art writing and its increasing professionalism in the nineteenth century.[2] Fraser argues for a more inclusive and expansive model of what constitutes art writing, thereby offering a revisionist account of the genealogy of the profession and discipline. The contributions of women to art writing during this period were wide-ranging and diverse, extending from historical subjects to reviews of contemporary art exhibitions, and to the catalogues themselves. In this context museums and galleries might be usefully recast as worksites for an expanding group of professionals.

We can think about this by examining the interrelated art historical processes of looking, reading, and writing through the professional trajectories of three very different art writers.[3] Emilia Dilke (E. F. S. Pattison) (1840–1904) was a specialist in eighteenth-century French art; Gertrude Campbell (1857–1911) was a London-based

[1] I am very grateful to Vicky Mills, Heather Tilley, the *19* editorial team, and anonymous referees. Warmest thanks are also due to Hilary Fraser for many generous and intellectually stimulating conversations on this topic.

[2] Hilary Fraser, *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman*, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture, 95 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). See also, *Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts, 1820–1979*, ed. by Claire Richter Sherman with Adele M. Holcomb, Contributions in Women's Studies, 18 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981); Maria Alambritis, Susanna Avery-Quash, and Hilary Fraser, 'Introduction', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 28 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.857>; Meaghan Clarke, *Critical Voices: Women and Art Criticism in Britain, 1880–1905* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Meaghan Clarke and Francesco Ventrella, 'Women's Expertise and the Culture of Connoisseurship', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 1–10 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973762.2017.1308623>.

[3] Thanks to colleagues at the AAH and BAVS for valuable discussions on women reading, including chairs Lara Perry and Vicky Horne, and Amelia Yeates and Beth Palmer.

Fig. 1: Maurice Greiffenhagan, 'Academy of Intentions', *Art Journal*, May 1892, p. 141.

art reviewer; and Christiana Herringham (1852–1929) developed technical expertise on the early Renaissance. Fraser observes that many women art writers were working from the margins of institutional structures (*Women Writing*, p. 10). Indeed, none of these women were directly employed by galleries or museums. However, their work as art writers enabled a parallel professional practice. Fragmentary archives and ephemeral sources pose challenges, but they also reveal para-institutional practices, working patterns, and political networks.

This article asks what were the specific professional practices that enabled them to secure authority on art collections and exhibitions? How did they undertake museum work? How was their authority distributed through the press and exhibitions? And what can we learn by 'looking back' at their occupation of professional spaces? What kinds of legacies can be uncovered? I argue that the intellectual and material resonances of women art writers intersect with the histories of art museums and galleries. Objects that

now reside in public collections offer material clues to the working practices of women within collections and give insight into their often unacknowledged contributions to fostering knowledge and expertise. Objects bequeathed by women to public institutions can complicate established accounts of early developments in the field of art history.

'Being foreign' and professional work

Fraser has reflected on how the unsettling subversion of national cultural boundaries by women art writers was a shaping factor in the evolving identity of British art and art history as produced in Britain. She suggests the cosmopolitan mobility of nineteenth-century female art historians, as exemplified by Dilke and the Renaissance art writer Vernon Lee, was implicated in their fall from favour for subsequent generations.[4] Like Dilke, Campbell and Herringham also fell out of view.

All three women challenged the insularity of Victorian Britain in their habits. Dilke fenced, went to French plays, and was seen smoking and reading *Le Figaro* in a café.[5] She would write for several periodicals and take up the post of art editor of the *Academy* and the *Athenaeum* and conduct research on French art and design. During the 1880s and 1890s she wrote multiple volumes on French painting, sculpture, architecture, and decorative art.[6]

Although over a decade younger, Gertrude Campbell similarly fenced, smoked, and rode a bicycle, as well as speaking fluent French and Italian, having spent her childhood in Italy.[7] Moreover, she drew attention to her unusual habits by writing about them in the press. She was even singled out as 'cosmopolitan' in an 1893 biographical article.[8] Campbell wrote for various periodicals as well as for two sets of columns for the *World*, both of which were predicated on visits to galleries and cultural institutions. One column reviewed contemporary exhibitions and the other, titled 'Woman's Walks', recorded her

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[4] Hilary Fraser, 'Writing Cosmopolis: The Cosmopolitan Aesthetics of Emilia Dilke and Vernon Lee', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 28 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.844>.

[5] Fraser, 'Writing Cosmopolis'; Kali Israel, *Names and Stories: Emilia Dilke and Victorian Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 184.

[6] Hilary Fraser, 'Emilia Francis, Lady Dilke (2 September 1840–24 October 1904)', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 28 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.862>; Colin Eisler, 'Lady Dilke (1840–1904): The Six Lives of an Art Historian', in *Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts*, ed. by Sherman with Holcomb, pp. 147–80; Elizabeth C. Mansfield, 'Women, Art History and the Public Sphere: Emilia Dilke's Eighteenth Century', in *Women, Femininity and Public Space in European Visual Culture, 1789–1914*, ed. by Temma Balducci and Heather Belnap Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 189–204.

[7] Anna Gruetzner Robins, *A Fragile Modernism: Whistler and His Impressionist Followers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Anne Jordan, *Love Well the Hour: The Life of Lady Colin Campbell (1857–1911)* (Leicester: Matador, 2010), pp. 171, 172.

[8] Meaghan Clarke, *Fashionability, Exhibition Culture and Gender Politics: Fair Women* (New York: Routledge, 2021), p. 113.

perambulations around the city and further afield in France and Italy. This kind of public art writing persona was not unique. Campbell's American contemporary, Elizabeth Robins Pennell, travelled widely through Europe on a bicycle, financing her excursions through regular columns and travel volumes.[9] By the 1890s these independent professional lifestyles were more prevalent and associated with the New Woman.

In contrast to many women art writers Christiana Herringham did not need to write in order to support herself economically.[10] However, she was similarly well travelled in Europe and North Africa, eventually undertaking trips to India in the first decade of the twentieth century. Herringham, perhaps best known as a founder of the National Art Collections Fund in 1903, wrote on a range of topics for the new *Burlington Magazine*. She also translated Cennino Cennini's early Renaissance treatise on painting and her accompanying 'Notes on Medieval Art Methods' documented her own experiments in tempera.[11]

In spite of the subsequent exclusions of women art writers in the twentieth century, what is interesting is the extent to which they occupied physical spaces, such as exhibitions, museums, and libraries. They were able to create and permeate a range of institutional and publishing frameworks. The libraries of Dilke and Herringham act as legacies of their intellectual scholarship. The breadth and international dimension of these collections speaks to Fraser's observations concerning their mobility and 'reading' cosmopolitanism ('Writing Cosmopolis').

In recent work on the historical precarity of women professionals in modern Britain, scholars have wondered if professional recognition could be claimed for them, despite the contingent and unstable nature of their working lives. Utilizing gender and marginality as analytical tools, Heidi Egginton and Zoë Thomas have asked if the gendered nature of precarity formed 'a foundation for practical innovations, political action, [and] cultural authority'.[12] This marginality echoes Fraser's analysis of women

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[9] Clarke, *Critical Voices*; Kimberly Morse Jones, *Elizabeth Robins Pennell, Nineteenth-Century Pioneer of Modern Art Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2017); Meaghan Clarke, '"At the Museum comme à l'ordinaire": Elizabeth Robins Pennell and Exhibition Culture', in *Elizabeth Robins Pennell: Critical Essays*, ed. by Dave Buchanan and Kimberly Morse Jones (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), pp. 236–55.

[10] *Saved!: 100 Years of the National Art Collections Fund*, ed. by Richard Verdi (London: Scala, 2003); Mary Lago, *Christiana Herringham and the Edwardian Art Scene* (London: Lund Humphries, 1996); Mary Lago, 'Christiana Herringham and the National Art Collections Fund', *Burlington Magazine*, 135 (1993), 202–11; Meaghan Clarke, 'Christiana Herringham (8 December 1852–25 February 1929)', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 28 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.865>; Meaghan Clarke, '"The Greatest Living Critic": Christiana Herringham and the Practice of Connoisseurship', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 94–116.

[11] *The Book of the Art of Cennino Cennini: A Contemporary Practical Treatise on Quattrocento Painting*, trans. by Christiana Jane Herringham (London: Allen, 1899).

[12] Heidi Egginton and Zoë Thomas, *Precarious Professionals: Gender, Identities and Social Change in Modern Britain* (London:

art writers in relation to institutional structures, although it must be acknowledged that by the late nineteenth century many were already established in the field. Nonetheless, contingency and instability were a feature of women's working lives; writers negotiated relationships with editors, publishers, collectors, and curators, alongside dealing with familial and health constraints. Women's precarity was a foundation for various kinds of involvement in political action and reform movements alongside their work within art and culture. This article begins by demonstrating how women art writers did much of their professional work from within the public space of the art museum. Analogously, the library will also be explored, as both a workspace and collection. The publishing industry had obvious significance for art writers and here a consideration of the art catalogue posits that professional opportunities and political networks could be intertwined. Its production, through modern printing, was realized in some cases by a cross-class group of women workers. Finally, the article will return to the museum and the library in order to 'look back' at the material legacies of women art writers in public collections.

Museum work

While women were rarely employed as professionals within European museums, they did have an established stake in other kinds of museum work by the late nineteenth century. One avenue was through study and copying of old masters in collections. A contemporary literary reference for the female copyist was the character of Hilda in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860). Fraser observes that Hawthorne's reading of Hilda's 'sympathy' for pictures was highly gendered, but at the same time it registered Hawthorne's anxiety about his own lack of visual sensibilities in contrast to his wife, the painter and illustrator Sophia Peabody, with whom he visited the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition of 1857 (*Women Writing*, pp. 15–16). Training in fine art developed visual acuity through sketching from plaster casts and models within studios, as well as through visits to collections. It was expected that students would draw and paint in front of the works they saw, as exemplified by the National Gallery's study days, and women similarly copied in museums such as the Louvre and the Uffizi.[13] Artistic practice was a common entry point for women art writers into museum work

Institute of Historical Research, 2021), p. 3.

[13] Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, 'Infesting the Galleries of Europe: The Copyist Emma Conant Church in Paris and Rome', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 10.2 (2011) <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/autumn11/infesting-the-galleries-of-europe-the-copyist-emma-conant-church-in-paris-and-rome> [accessed 18 February 2023]; Sheila Barker, 'The Female Artist in the Public Eye: Women Copyists at the Uffizi, 1770–1859', in *Women, Femininity and Public Space*, ed. by Balducci and Belnap Jensen, pp. 65–79; Meaghan Clarke, 'Women in the Galleries: New Angles on Old Masters in the Late Nineteenth Century', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 28 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.823>.

because it was not uncommon for writers to have some degree of fine art training. This was the case for Dilke, Campbell, and Herringham. The South Kensington Schools were a common destination for women and study involved time spent in the South Kensington Museum galleries (*Fig. 2*). The image shows the original facade of the museum which led into the lecture hall and refreshment rooms. The figures congregating in small groups at the entrance are all men. However, women designers, artists, and writers frequently crossed the impressive threshold for study and, in fact, female students in the National Art Training School painted the ceramic tiles in the Grill Room. Dilke spent three years as a student at Kensington between 1858 and 1861 (Israel, pp. 51–57). Later, her working methods were developed through visits to European collections. She journeyed beyond London, initially to Vienna, where, as her second husband later wrote, 'the mass of notes taken by [her] in the rich museums of the Austrian capital show a desire to embrace, by hard study, a complete view of the whole field of art and art-history.'[14] Further trips would expand the notetaking to collections in Italy in 1879 and 1881, annotating Wilhelm Bode's 1879 edition of Burckhardt's *Der Cicerone* and writing in her ever-present notebooks. As her husband related, 'her notes of [Marco] Minghetti's conversations as to the relations between the State and the Church, come between drawings of pictures in the Colonna and in the Doria galleries' (p. 56).

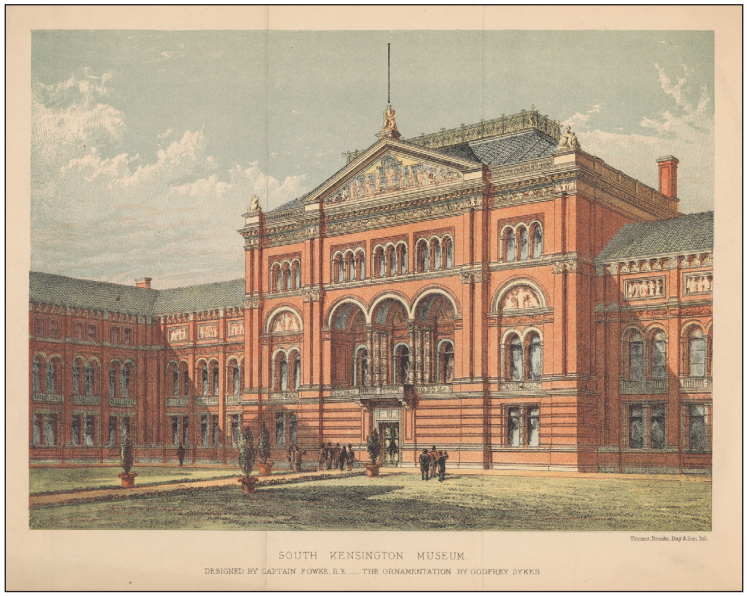

Fig. 2: Print made by unknown artist, published by Vincent Brooks, Day, South Kensington Museum, *c.* 1876, colour-printed lithograph on medium, slightly textured, cream wove paper, Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art Gallery Collection.

[14] Sir Charles W. Dilke, 'Memoir', in Lady Dilke, *The Book of the Spiritual Life* (London: Murray, 1905), pp. 1–128 (p. 26).

Sketching and copying in galleries were also part of Herringham's artistic training and a practice that she would continue throughout her working life. An extended trip to Vienna echoed Dilke's earlier journey. Herringham spent six months there in 1880 working in the galleries while her husband studied medicine. Mary Lago noted that Herringham's husband was worried she was bored, when in fact her boredom was with Viennese society and the long afternoon meals that took time away from her copying (*Christiana Herringham and the Edwardian Art Scene*, p. 30). Herringham's surviving visual records of collections are diverse, and include sketches, watercolours, and tempera paintings of works in the National Gallery and European collections.[15] The records suggest an emphasis on the visual as a way of recording visits to collections, but some of her surviving sketches have detailed annotations, revealing a focused technical analysis of works. Herringham was intent on copying early Renaissance paintings, not as an amateur practice, but as a way of understanding technique. The process of sketching and notetaking while looking closely at art was crucial for writing, but it often involved research in libraries.

Library work

It was advisable to be prepared for visits to collections, particularly international ones. Dilke's early travel indicated the importance of reading and annotating guides. The process of art writing involved the consultation of not only guides to collections, but also a range of related sources such as artists' biographies and art periodicals. Facility with modern languages gave all three writers ease of access to periodicals and sources as well as to European collections. Fraser and Caroline Palmer have emphasized the fundamental importance of linguistic skill and translation for women art writers.[16] The empirical research undertaken by writers such as Dilke and Herringham involved translation of primary sources.

Literary scholars have identified the domed Reading Room at the British Library as a particularly important space for middle-class women attempting to forge a career in London.[17] South Kensington was an analogous space, where women could combine

[15] Laura MacCulloch and Michaela Jones curated the exhibition 'Christiana Herringham: Artist, Campaigner, Collector' (Royal Holloway, 14 January–8 March 2019).

[16] Caroline Palmer, '"I Will Tell Nothing That I Did Not *See*": British Women's Travel Writing, Art and the Science of Connoisseurship, 1776–1860', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 51 (2015), 248–68; Fraser, *Women Writing*, pp. 72–73. Fraser's analysis extends to a metaphorical understanding of translation in her discussion of Emily Pfeiffer and Michael Field.

[17] Susan David Bernstein, *Roomscape: Women Writers in the British Museum from George Eliot to Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Gillian Sutherland, *In Search of the New Woman: Middle-Class Women and Work in Britain, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

visits to galleries with research in the art library. The art writer Julia Cartwright described visits in search of Renaissance treatises and contemporary scholarship in her diary.[18]

There were other ways to access crucial art historical resources: either through family or contacts who had possession of private libraries. Book reviews were an alternative method for keeping on top of current writing. Dilke published an extraordinary number of reviews in various periodicals including the *Saturday Review*, *Portfolio*, and the *Academy*; and the *Athenaeum* 'marked file' reveals over one hundred anonymous contributions between 1868 and 1904.[19] Book reviews, albeit anonymous, were an important part of her publishing profile in periodicals. Books enabled her to amass knowledge and intellectual prowess in her field of art history. They were also a means to an end. Her second husband claimed that 'she naturally wished to find by publication additional income, especially for the sake of personal independence, to the end, for example of collecting a personal library of books' (Charles Dilke, p, 26).

Lene Østermark-Johansen has commented on Emilia Dilke's beautifully bound copy of Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* that survives in Brasenose College Library, Oxford: the brown crushed Levant morocco, gilt, and elaborately tooled with scarlet silk endpapers. Dilke had bound the volume after Pater's death and had written a review critical of Pater's ahistoricism in the *Westminster Review* years earlier in 1873. Her monogram EFSD was boldly embossed in gold in the centre of the front cover. Østermark-Johansen observes that this indicates both ownership and appropriation.[20]

The binding and monogram on Pater's volume also suggest that Dilke was concerned about the materiality of books within her own collection. Although very little of Dilke's artwork survives, her specially designed book plates are visible on the inside of many of her treasured books.[21] Moreover, she undertook restoration of bindings and torn

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[18] Clarke, 'Women in the Galleries'; *A Bright Remembrance: The Diaries of Julia Cartwright 1851–1924*, ed. by Angela Emanuel (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989).

[19] Elizabeth Mansfield, 'Articulating Authority: Emilia Dilke's Early Essays and Reviews', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 31 (1998), 75–86; Eisler, pp. 179–80; Marysa Demoor, *Their Fair Share: Women, Power, and Criticism in the Athenaeum, from Millicent Garett [sic] Fawcett to Katherine Mansfield, 1870–1920* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 9–24.

[20] Lene Østermark-Johansen, 'The Book Beautiful: Emilia Dilke's Copy of Walter Pater's Studies in the History of the Renaissance', *Brasenose College Library & Archives*, 2015 <https://brasenosecollegelibrary.wordpress.com/2015/06/11/the-book-beautiful-emilia-dilkes-copy-of-walter-paters-studies-in-the-history-of-the-renaissance-by-lene-oster-mark-johansen/> [accessed 18 February 2023]. Campbell's library does not survive, but a bookplate created for her is in the British Museum collection <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1931-0818-3.> [accessed 18 February 2023].

[21] Gilbert R. Redgrave, 'The Lady Dilke Gift to the National Art Library', *Library*, 2nd ser., 7 (1906), 263–74 (p. 273). Many thanks to Carolyn Sargentson and Rowan Watson for Dilke discussions in the V&A.

pages of older volumes in her own collection, making notations about books requiring repair.[22] Dilke's personal network included expert bookbinders.

Books were central to the development and realization of Dilke's professional career. While she wrote voluminously for the press, it was the publication of her own books that gave her added weight and authority as an art historian. Herringham similarly wrote signed and unsigned pieces for the press, but the heavy Cennini volume gave her credence on technical art history. For her final project — to copy the decaying cave paintings at Ajanta, India — Herringham was intent on producing a 'big library book'.[23] Her determination to produce two books, a large scholarly volume as well as an informal account of her experiences, is significant. For Herringham it was crucial that her research was weighty, and its destination was a library. Complications related to the project and her ill health meant these aspirations were not fully realized, although a 'library book' was eventually published.[24]

After Emilia Dilke's second marriage to Charles Dilke she continued to spend money on books for her own work, but also on fine editions of Latin and Italian classics (Charles Dilke, p. 7). It is her carefully curated and cared for collection of books that now resides in the National Art Library. Her bequest serves as an intellectual and material legacy of her art historical writing.[25] Likewise, Herringham's personal library was gifted to Bedford College and is now held at Royal Holloway. As a result of Herringham's illness during the final decades of her life, her working library is similarly a kind of time capsule of art historical research in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Scholars have recently turned their attention to the historical formation of art historical research libraries to argue that collections are ideally suited to documenting art history's evolving relationship with social, intellectual, and geopolitical trends. A series of studies focuses on male collectors, including the private library of Charles Eastlake, now at the National Gallery, but women art writers can also be considered in relation to these research collections.[26] Susanna Avery-Quash and Christine Riding

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[22] London, National Art Library (NAL), V&A, Nominal File SF 468. Charles Dilke indicated she repaired books while simultaneously thinking about creative writing (p. 94).

[23] Lago, 'Christiana Herringham and the National Art Collections Fund', pp. 207–18.

[24] Sarah Victoria Turner, 'From Ajanta to Sydenham: "Indian" Art at the Sydenham Palace', in *After 1851: The Material and Visual Cultures of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham*, ed. by Kate Nichols and Sarah Victoria Turner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 122–42; Christiana Herringham, *Ajanta Frescoes: Being Reproductions in Colour and Monochrome of Frescoes in Some of the Caves at Ajanta* (London: Oxford University Press, 1915).

[25] Redgrave; Susanna Robson, 'Emilia Francis Strong Pattison, Lady Dilke (1840–1904)', in *A Diversity of Gifts: Four Benefactors of the National Art Library*, London, NAL, 1995, ex. cat. pp. 19–25.

[26] Jeanne-Marie Musto, '"Historic Libraries and the Historiography of Art": A Series of Articles Arising from Sessions Held at the 107th College Art Association Annual Conference, New York, 13–16 February 2019 and the 108th College Art Association Annual Conference, Chicago, 12–15 February 2020', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 24 (2021) <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2021/05/musto-intro.pdf> [accessed 18 February 2023].

have pointed to the origins of the National Gallery's Research Centre in the acquisition of Sir Charles Eastlake's library from his widow, the art historian Elizabeth (Rigby) Eastlake, in 1870. Women have continued to contribute to National Gallery research collections: the antiquarian volumes, for example, given by Mary Raine Harrop and Edith Katherine Lee Harrop in 1949.[27] Dilke's library at the National Art Library is relevant in this context, as is the personal library of Herringham. The latter similarly gives insight into Herringham's working methods alongside her social, intellectual, and political trajectories as a reader and writer on art.

Both Dilke's and Herringham's libraries contain a wealth of historical and contemporary material amassed over the final decades of the nineteenth century. They contain volumes that were (and remain) valuable in a market sense as rare, antiquarian sources. In addition, among Dilke's library were various runs of catalogues, including old master loan exhibitions at the Royal Academy, Burlington Fine Arts Club, National Gallery, and National Portrait Gallery, as well as exhibitions in Scotland, Ireland, and, of course, France where she had visited the salons and expositions. Her collection of these more ephemeral contemporary sources evidenced the importance of the catalogue for art writing. Catalogues were a vital element for art historical research, albeit without a standardized format.

Catalogues

Travel and museum guides were regularly drawn upon as a source of information for research in advance of travel, as exemplified by Dilke's use of Burckhardt's guide to Italian collections. The catalogue existed in a variety of forms during the Victorian period. Giles Waterfield suggested that the art museum catalogue at the end of the nineteenth century generally followed two different formats. Philanthropic projects saw the catalogue as a means of instructing and morally improving the working class. The second, more academic, approach, providing short informative texts about objects, had been established in institutions such as the National Gallery.[28] Neither of these types of catalogue were initially illustrated.

Catalogues were also vital sources for exhibitions, as they provided a record of the artists and titles of works that became the subject of reviews. Their physical appearance was becoming more diverse. Some were elaborately illustrated with photogravures or halftones and this became more feasible at the end of the century. But in the case of

[27] Susanna Avery-Quash with Christine Riding, 'Two Hundred Years of Women Benefactors at the National Gallery: An Exercise in Mapping Uncharted Territory', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 23 (2020) <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/avery-quash-and-riding1.pdf> [accessed 18 February 2023] (p. 49).

[28] Giles Waterfield, *The People's Galleries: Art Museums and Exhibitions in Britain, 1800–1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 238–40.

temporary exhibitions many were merely lists of the objects displayed and were quite small in size. They were therefore easy to purchase at the entrance and were portable for carrying around an exhibition. It is these we see appearing in many popular representations of exhibition openings. Information was often limited to the artist and title of the work, occasionally the date, and, if the work was not for sale, the lender's name. Pages had wide margins giving ample space for annotations as evidenced in surviving copies. For art writers they had a dual function as notebooks and sources of information.

Anne Helmreich and Francesco Freddolini have explored the multifaceted nature of catalogues as both narratives and material objects. They propose to read these vital building blocks of art history '"against the grain" by implicitly asking what constitutes an inventory and a catalogue, what other research possibilities these genres hold, and explicitly exploring what new meanings and concerns emerge when these texts are understood as multivalent'.[29] The changing constitution of the catalogue during this period is interesting in terms of its functionality for women art writers as a source for research, but also as a possible site for consolidating and sharing their own knowledge and expertise.

For public institutions the catalogue, as a form of collection documentation, became an important part of professional museum practice. There was an early precedent for women as writers of travel literature and collection guides operating outside the preserve of the institution. Mariana Starke (1762–1838) published early guidebooks predating John Murray and *Baedeker*.[30] Fraser argues that earlier art writers, such as Starke, Anna Jameson (1794–1860), and Elizabeth Rigby (1809–1893), seized the opportunity to make use of literary forms to write about art. Fraser explores how these women experimented with and remade genres (*Women Writing*, pp. 62–90). Female writers, particularly of guidebooks, invariably proclaimed an educational rather than a critical role, but at the same time sought to establish order and contributed to new narratives about collections. Susanna Avery-Quash has recently drawn attention to the significance of Anna Jameson's *Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London* (1842). It contained extensive information about paintings in publicly

[29] Francesco Freddolini and Anne Helmreich, 'Inventories, Catalogues and Art Historiography: Exploring Lists against the Grain', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 11 (2014) <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/freddolini_helmreich_introduction.pdf> [accessed 18 February 2023] (p. 1).

[30] See also, *Discovering Ancient and Modern Primitives: The Travel Journals of Maria Callcott, 1827–28*, ed. by Carly Collier and Caroline Palmer, Volume of the Walpole Society, 78 (London: Walpole Society, 2016). Callcott was the author of the first monograph in English on Giotto's Chapel published in 1835, illustrated by her husband. See Carly Collier, 'Maria Callcott, Queen Victoria and the "Primitives"', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 27–47 (p. 34).

accessible collections, and 'it raised a number of fundamental questions about the nascent national collection in terms of the National Gallery's collecting, display, and management policies as well as other general points about public access to art, taste, and patronage'.[31]

The catalogue increasingly became part of the remit of the emerging professional role of the keeper or curator.[32] However, women did contribute as external advisors and even writers. Claude Phillips prepared the first catalogue of the Wallace Collection when he became its director, but he consulted extensively with Dilke as the authority on eighteenth-century French art. In 1900 he wrote to ask for her guidance on a work in the collection:

> You know the little Fragonard here which we both call La Maitresse d'école. I take this to be the same picture which was engraved as 'Dites donc s'il vous plait.' Referring to your book, I found both mention separately under the above names. Do you know of two distinct pictures or are they not rather one and the same?[33]

In the painting Fragonard depicts a cherubic young child standing before a teacher who is about to cut him a slice of bread, hence the second instructive title, 'say please' (*Fig. 3*). The exchange between Dilke and Phillips points to the challenges of identifying an artist's *oeuvre* when working with private collections and reproductions. The catalogue required close analysis of individual objects in the Wallace Collection, something Dilke had already done. In this case she had provided the classification of Fragonard's late unexhibited works in her volume on French art, wherein she grouped his 'most seductive flesh painting', exemplified by *Dites donc s'il vous plaît*, as dating from 1780.[34] In another letter Phillips alluded to more concrete interventions: 'Many thanks for the rewritten pages about Watteau [...]. I shall look forward with great pleasure to the "Sculptures of the XVIII Century".'[35] Evidently, Dilke was providing text for the early iterations of the catalogue. She was also asked to provide the introduction to it in 1903.[36]

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[31] Susanna Avery-Quash, 'Illuminating the Old Masters and Enlightening the British Public: Anna Jameson and the Contribution of British Women to Empirical Art History in the 1840s', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 28 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.832>.

[32] Elizabeth Heath, 'A Man of "unflagging zeal and industry": Sir George Scharf as an Emerging Professional within the Nineteenth-Century Museum World', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 18 (2018) <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/heath.pdf> [accessed 18 February 2023].

[33] Claude Phillips to Lady Dilke, NAL, V&A, 18.11.1900, 86 NN BOX II, XXVII PT 1.

[34] Lady Dilke, *French Painters of the XVIIIth Century* (London: Bell, 1899), p. 68.

[35] Claude Phillips to Lady Dilke, NAL, V&A, 2.08.1900, XXVII PT 5.

[36] Émile Molinier, *The Wallace Collection (Objets d'art) at Hertford House*, intro. by Lady Dilke, 3 vols (London: Goupil, 1903).

Fig. 3: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Dites donc s'il vous plaît (Say Please)*, *c.* 1780, oil on canvas, 28.9 × 37.2 cm, Wallace Collection. Wikimedia Commons.

Exhibition catalogues for temporary exhibitions also began to expand their content. Short prefaces or essays appeared, often signed by an art writer. This format, with writers external to the gallery, was evident in commercial exhibition catalogues.[37] Campbell not only made use of catalogues as a reviewer, she also contributed as a writer. During the 1890s the Fine Art Society included 'prefatory notes' which were akin to the now familiar catalogue essay to add weight to their catalogues. While art reviews were still often written anonymously or pseudonymously, these essays were signed. Gertrude Campbell was among the contributors, as was her contemporary and friend Alice Meynell. They also wrote for the Leicester Galleries and the Goupil Gallery. On the one hand these were generally laudatory pieces about the work, as exemplified in Campbell's comments on watercolourist Charles Sainton's 'imagination which idealises woman's beauty', 'firm hand in drawing', and 'delightful feeling for tender colour-harmonies'. On the other hand the notes demonstrated expertise, for example, Campbell's knowledge of Egypt in the case of Frank Goodall R.A. and Meynell's authority on the Newlyn School.[38] The

[37] On mapping the rise of commercial galleries and the art market, see Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, 'Local/Global: Mapping Nineteenth-Century London's Art Market', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 11.3 (2012) <http://19thc-art-worldwide.org/index.php/autumn12/fletcher-helmreich-mapping-the-london-art-market> [accessed 18 February 2023].

[38] Lady Colin Campbell, *Catalogue of a Collection of Drawings of London by Herbert Marshall, R.W.S.: Exhibited at the Fine Art Society's, with a Note* (London: [Fine Art Society], 1890); Lady Colin Campbell, *Pictures and Pastels by Henri Le Sidaner* (London: Goupil Gallery; Marchant, 1905); Lady Colin Campbell, *Catalogue of a Collection of Pictures of Egypt and Life in the Valley of the Nile by Frederick Goodall, R.A.: With Notes by the Artist and a Preface* (London: [Fine Art Society], 1894); Lady Colin Campbell, *Catalogue of a Collection of Water-Colour Drawings of Facts and Fancies by Charles Sainton: With a Prefatory Note* (London: [Fine Art Society], 1894); Alice Meynell, *Catalogue of a Collection of Water-Colour Drawings Illustrating Fisher-Life by Walter Langley, R.I.: With a Prefatory Note* (London: [Fine Art Society], 1893); Alice Meynell, *An*

prefaces also indicated the prescience for artists of cultivating contacts with critics. Women, therefore, were not only holding catalogues in temporary gallery spaces, but were also writing them and thereby, in the process, playing a role in the modern art market.[39] Short essays or notes also appeared in other kinds of catalogues. The Society of Painters in Tempera, a group Herringham had co-founded along with like-minded artists, held a show in the Carfax Gallery in 1905. In the catalogue 'preface' Herringham detailed the history and the unique qualities of the medium, such as its truth to colour in pigment.[40] Another aspect of the importance and proliferation of catalogues during the late nineteenth century was their materiality in terms of production.

Women's printing and catalogues

I want to return to the image of the woman in the gallery clutching the catalogue. As highlighted above, the exhibition catalogue was vital in conveying information for the gallery-goer, the press, and, by extension, the art market. The actual production of catalogues was a key aspect of planning and a significant financial outlay for the organizers. Printers were relied upon to produce a run before the show opened. Among the producers of these catalogues was the Women's Printing Society (WPS).

Women's employment in the industrial trades, especially printing, was a highly contested issue during the second half of the nineteenth century, but women made significant contributions in America and Britain. In 1876 the trade unionist and suffragist Emma (Smith) Paterson formed the WPS. This was envisioned as an institution 'for and by women' that would provide greater flexibility in the work schedule and benefit both married and unmarried workers. Overlaps between the art world and the WPS can be traced back to its early development. Emilia Dilke was an expert on French art, but she was also an activist and had been an early supporter of Paterson. After Paterson's death Dilke wrote that 'I never ceased to have full knowledge of Mrs. Paterson's plans and I worked with her whenever I could.'[41] In fact she took over as president of the Women's Trade Union Provident League after the death of Paterson in 1886 and contributed one hundred pounds annually.

Exhibition of Pictures Painted in Austria-Hungary by Adrian and Marianne Stokes, Leicester Galleries, Exhibition, no. 72 (London: Brown & Phillips, 1907).

[39] Recent scholarship on the art market in this period includes, *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London 1850–1939*, ed. by Pamela M. Fletcher and Anne Helmreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Anne Helmreich, 'The Art Market and the Spaces of Sociability in Victorian London', *Victorian Studies*, 59 (2017), 436–49; Samuel Shaw and Barbara Pezzini, 'Exhibitions and the Market for Modern British Art: *Independent Art of Today* at Agnew's Gallery, 1906', *Art History*, 43 (2020), 710–40.

[40] Christiana Jane Powell Herringham, 'Preface', in *Society of Painters in Tempera, First Exhibition, June 1905: An Exhibition of Paintings in Tempera and in Fresco, of Gilding & of Illumination and Caligraphy, by Members of the Society and Others* (London: Carfax, 1905), pp. 2–8 (p. 7).

[41] Emilia F. S. Dilke, 'Benefit Societies and Trades Unions for Women', *Fortnightly Review*, June 1889, pp. 852–56 (p. 852).

Unfortunately, little exists of the archive of the WPS and the publisher is often not recorded or searchable in library catalogues. The historian Michelle Tusan has called the WPS a 'maternalist cooperative' model.[42] Initially, it was called the Women's Cooperative Printing Press, but 'cooperative' was dropped from the title. It was not the first women's press, and there were others such as the Victoria Press (ended 1882) which produced the *English Women's Journal*, but it was the one which achieved longevity lasting into the 1950s. Tusan observes,

> In this shop where women performed the prestigious work and men did the grunt work, women visibly questioned gendered hierarchies of work and business practices. This challenge allowed Victorian feminists to imagine a world where women could find success by relying on women's networks for goods, services, and economic support. (p. 121)

The first headquarters of the WPS were on Great College Street, but they suffered a serious fire in 1893 and relocated across Green Park to Brick Street, Piccadilly.

Other early supporters and shareholders included the German composer and musician Agnes Zimmerman and her companion, the philanthropist and education activist Lady Louisa Goldsmid, as well as the bookbinder Sarah Prideaux and proponent of women's education Mabel Winkworth. It involved a mixture of reform-minded women. The WPS provided women printers with well-paid work and had a shared system of profits that gave workers a stake in the company's profitability. It also provided women with training via a system of paid apprenticeships. By 1897 the manager Margaret Weede reported that the WPS staff were receiving a ten per cent bonus, with a gross profit of over four thousand pounds.[43] Printing was posited as a favourable career choice for women in Margaret Bateson's 1895 book *Professions for Women*.[44]

The WPS published mainstream books, newspapers, and pamphlets as well as suffrage lectures and tracts. In addition to providing paid work for women printers, women writers were able to circulate their writing outside conventional publications. At the same time the WPS fostered ways in which women could work collaboratively, providing an important network for women reformers. The *Women's Penny Paper*, printed by the WPS, declared on its masthead: 'only paper conducted, written, printed and published by women.' WPS networks extended further into liberal, socialist,

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[42] Michelle Tusan, 'Performing Work: Gender, Class, and the Printing Trade in Victorian Britain', *Journal of Women's History*, 16.1 (2004), 103–26 (p. 105).

[43] Emily Hill, 'The Women's Printing Society', *Women's Penny Paper*, 7 October 1897, pp. 228–29 (p. 229).

[44] Elizabeth Crawford, 'The Women's Printing Society', British Library, 20 October 2020 <https://www.bl.uk/womens-rights/articles/the-womens-printing-society> [accessed 18 February 2023].

and radical circles. Clients included other women's magazines, such as the *Queen*, *Englishwomen's Review*, *Home Chat*, the *British and Colonial Printer and Stationer*, and later, *Orpheus: The Transactions of the Theosophical Art-Circle*.[45]

The society's publishing profile indicates a particular association with women's exhibitions. In 1893 it published the catalogue of the suffrage campaigner Helen Blackburn's collection of portraits of eminent British women, as exhibited at the international Columbian exhibition in Chicago. These 190 portraits included abbesses, peeresses, intellectuals, educationalists, and other notable women as well as several living women. As Deborah Cherry has argued, portrait collections, such as Blackburn's, created a visual genealogy of authoritative and powerful women.[46] The collection was then gifted to the Women's Reading Room at Bristol University, presumably allowing a new generation of women to read the catalogue alongside the portraits. Emma Ferry has traced Blackburn's earlier display of the portraits as part of the 1885 loan exhibition of women's industries at the Queen's Villa in Bristol.[47] Sadly, the portraits now seem to have been dispersed. Another client for the WPS was the Women's International Art Club, which began as the Paris Club in 1899 and promoted the work of women artists of all nationalities.[48] Exhibitions were held annually in alternative venues, such as the Grafton Galleries.[49] Its model of exhibiting women's work separately was rejected by some artists on the grounds that it would impact negatively on their careers.[50] Although the International Club did not have a suffrage affiliation, unlike Blackburn's exhibition, the WPS continued to work actively with the suffrage movement, publishing, for example, the National Society for Women's Suffrage reports in 1889 and 1910.Thus, the WPS work with women's art organizations extended across the political spectrum.

The WPS also published catalogues of other organizations with women artists and women curators, including Christiana Herringham. In contrast to Dilke, Herringham's connection to the WPS is less immediately visible in surviving accounts. The WPS printed

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[45] Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), p. 263.

[46] Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850–1900* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 195.

[47] Emma Ferry, '"A Novelty among Exhibitions": The Loan Exhibition of Women's Industries, Bristol, 1885', in *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870–1950*, ed. by Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 51–66.

[48] C. Gasquoine Hartley, 'The Paris Club of International Women Artists', *Art Journal*, September 1900, pp. 282–84.

[49] See Una Richmond, '"Unity is strength": Female Sculptors and Women-Only Exhibiting Culture in the Twentieth Century', *Sculpture Journal* (forthcoming).

[50] On the WIAC, see Richmond. Several women expressed reservations about women-only exhibitions, including Herringham. Although she had exhibited her work in a 'women's section' of the Victorian Era exhibition in 1897, she later argued against the segregation of women's work. See Zoë Thomas, 'At Home with the Women's Guild of Arts: Gender and Professional Identity in London Studios, *c*. 1880–1925', *Women's History Review*, 24 (2015), 938–64 (p. 955).

the *Papers of the Society of Painters in Tempera*, which documented the group's modern experiments with egg tempera and early Renaissance techniques. This publication can be linked to Herringham's involvement with a group of women active in artistic and educational reform. Friendship with the interior designers Rhoda and Agnes Garrett is evidenced by Herringham's red chalk portrait of Rhoda Garrett (Royal Holloway). It was Agnes Garrett who provided a testimonial for the WPS in 1887: 'I have received the cards and Circulars and I am very much pleased with them, and very grateful to you for all the trouble you have taken with them.'[51] The following year Herringham was one of the founding directors with the Garretts of the Ladies' Residential Chambers, in an effort to provide accommodation for professional women. Another clue to Herringham's connections with the society is found in the surviving annual report for 1892.[52] By this time the directors included Rosamond Powell, Herringham's sister; the WPS printed a biography of their father in 1903.[53] In addition to Dilke's direct connection to trade unionism, WPS work evidenced the interplay of gender and class in the context of cultural philanthropy in London. WPS networks overlapped with Herringham's support for artistic and educational projects in Whitechapel. For example, the catalogues of the annual Lambeth and Southwark free loan picture exhibitions for working people were printed by the WPS.

Legacies

Recently, Jessica Gregory, curatorial support officer at the British Library, has observed that despite the varied intellectual output of Emilia Dilke, she has 'no Archive of her Own'. In the modern manuscripts at the British Library, surprisingly little is preserved although some items are found among those of powerful men.[54] While manuscript archives dedicated solely to women art writers are rare, in the case of Dilke, Campbell, and Herringham, they have left multiple traces.

The legacies of women art writers have in part been overlooked due to the ephemerality of their archive; contributions often took the form of reviews and essays,

[51] Manchester Central Archives and Local Studies, Manchester Central Library, Women's Suffrage Collection, Selected Testimonials of the Society, 1887–1888, 16 May 1887, M50/4/17/1–2 Women's Printing Society, 1, c.1888.

[52] Manchester Central Library, M50/4/17/1–2 Women's Printing Society, 1892, Sixteenth Annual Report, 31 January 1892.

[53] Rosamond Powell married William Wills in 1894 and later published a family memoir also printed by the society: [Rosamond E. Willis], *A Family Memoir; Being Some Account of T. W. Powell and His Wife M. E. Powell and of Their Ancestors* (London: [Woman's Printing Society], 1903).

[54] Jessica Gregory, 'What's in a Name? The Archival Legacy of Emilia Francis Strong/Pattison/Dilke', English and Drama blog, British Library, 16 December 2020 <https://blogs.bl.uk/english-and-drama/2020/12/whats-in-a-name-the-archival-legacy-of-emilia-francis-strongpattersondilke.html> [accessed 18 February 2023].

many of which have only recently become more available through digitization. While archives and personal papers are fragmentary and elusive to the present-day scholar, the periodical press is much more accessible as a way of mapping women's writing.

In her work on women in museums in the late nineteenth century, Kate Hill explores the challenges women encountered in a period in which it was accepted practice for eminent men to ensure a lasting legacy through donations to cultural institutions.[55] Bequeathing libraries and objects was one way for women to intervene in these practices. For these women, activism in trade unions, educational reform, and charitable projects was connected to the gifting of objects to public institutions and educational establishments. Dilke's legacy is evident elsewhere in the V&A. Her name is referenced, for example, in the catalogue alongside her scholarship on French furniture, although unfortunately she is much less findable in the new Beta collections catalogue. Other objects she gifted include an eighteenth-century writing case, an accoutrement that had art historical and professional resonance. Visitors to the William and Judith Bollinger Gallery at the V&A can see an exquisite green chrysoberyl bodice ornament and earrings set, made in Portugal (*c.* 1760), that Dilke bequeathed to the collection. In fact, when it was gifted to the V&A, the earring pendants had been reconfigured as brooches, so it is unlikely she wore the entire set as it appears in the gallery (*Fig. 4*). This had previously been exhibited in Lisbon and at South Kensington, and the transnational exhibition history of the jewellery was recorded as an important aspect of Dilke's ownership.[56]

Fig. 4: Bodice ornament, *c.* 1760, Portugal, chrysoberyls set in silver, with stylized flowers and leaves and five pendants, V&A. Wikimedia Commons.

[55] Kate Hill, *Women and Museums, 1850–1914: Modernity and the Gendering of Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 127–55.

[56] NAL, V&A, Nominal File SF 468.

In addition to paintings and books, Herringham's legacy encompasses diverse objects ranging from Indian miniatures to a nineteenth-century Chinese apron. These exist across two collections, Royal Holloway and Newnham College, where curators have recently reassessed her legacy as an artist and collector.[57] An examination of the objects bequeathed by women art writers intersects with a valuable reassessment of the varied roles of women as collectors and in cultural philanthropy in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[58] Women collectors were numerous and well known within the period before their subsequent exclusion from or, as Kate Hill notes, 'occlusion within' elite institutions.[59] As I have argued, an examination of objects and worksites in relation to women art writers complicates their later 'occlusion within' institutions and gives insight into the specificity of their professional practices. In relation to collections and cultural philanthropy, Helen Jones and Imogen Tedbury productively analyse the social links that emerge across records of women visitors to the Wallace Collection and portraits in women's colleges.[60]

In this latter context Dilke's jewellery might be aligned with another aspect of the legacy of women art writers: portraits speak to the representation and embodiment of a professional identity. The National Portrait Gallery holds a miniature and large portrait of Dilke by Hubert von Herkomer (*Fig. 5*). While in neither surviving portrait is she wearing the Portuguese jewels, Kali Israel has drawn attention to contemporary writing where Dilke appears as a 'maker of herself into pictures' and, more recently, Colleen Denney has explored Dilke's agency in commissioning the Herkomer portrait.[61] Jan Marsh notes that although the Herkomer portrait was to be given to the gallery after her death, it was not, and only entered the collection later.[62] The reason for its initial rejection is not recorded. In a strange parallel Gertrude Campbell was also determined that her portrait by Giovanni Boldini should be given to the gallery, but records indicate that there was debate about whether it should enter the collection

[57] MacCulloch and Jones; and Gill Sutherland and Kate Williams, *Walking on the Grass, Dancing in the Corridors: Newnham at 150* (London: Profile, 2021).

[58] Tom Stammers, 'Women Collectors and Cultural Philanthropy, *c.* 1850–1920', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 31 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.3347>.

[59] Kate Hill, 'Afterword', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 31 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.3043>.

[60] Helen C. Jones, 'More than Mere Ornaments: Female Visitors to Sir Richard Wallace's Art Collection', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 31 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.3012>; Imogen Tedbury, 'New Collections for New Women: Collecting and Commissioning Portraits at the Early Women's University Colleges', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 31 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.3353>.

[61] Israel, p. 172; Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England: My Lady Scandalous Reconsidered* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 83–115.

[62] Sir Hubert von Herkomer, *Emilia Francis (née Strong), Lady Dilke*, National Portrait Gallery <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw01866/Emilia-Francis-ne-Strong-Lady-Dilke> [accessed 18 February 2023].

(Clarke, *Critical Voices*, pp. 36–41). Eventually, both portraits were accepted, signalling both the history of their bodily presence in the institution and their professional status alongside 'eminent Victorians' in the collection.

Fig. 5: Hubert von Herkomer, *Emilia Francis (née Strong), Lady Dilke*, 1887, oil on canvas, 139.7 × 109.2 cm. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

In conclusion, turn-of-the-century illustrations reveal the presence of women in galleries and museums, as well as libraries. Galleries were spaces where women were undertaking museum work as professional art writers. The spaces of the South Kensington Museums, the National Gallery, and the British Museum reading rooms were sites for the acquisition of knowledge, but also for exchange and intervention. Women established cultural authority in the shifting arenas of publishing and exhibition culture. The catalogues women clutched as they strode through the galleries in contemporary illustrations were indicative of their mobile engagement with both contemporary and historical art. Dilke, Campbell, and Herringham contributed to the development of a professional practice of looking, reading, sketching, and writing from within the museum. As part of this process, they amassed their own collections of books: Dilke and Herringham secured personal research libraries. The catalogue,

a building block of art history, was becoming more relevant in new formats. Gallery visitors were able to consult essays on temporary exhibitions and more substantial inventories of collections. Curators sought out precise details about objects and their histories as exemplified by the production of the Wallace catalogue. All three of these women utilized these as sources and were active agents in shaping the content. The WPS suggests a further para-institutional space for art alongside political action. At the same time, the professional lives overlapping these spaces, organizations, and networks were not without precarity. In terms of the expanding professional structures within galleries and museums, women were often operating at the margins. Moreover, the work of Dilke, Campbell, and Herringham was interrupted by periods of instability; all three were beset by serious health problems. They lack an 'archive of their own'; surviving remnants of their histories are scattered across multiple collections in multiple institutions.

One way to expand our understanding of the profession is to revisit the museum. Viewing objects, images, and texts side by side, rather than referencing them as discreet entities, allows us to think about museum work and professional practice in new ways. While there are significant gaps, women art writers ensured their legacies were materially visible in public collections and educational institutions. 'Looking back' across these diverse and dispersed collections, alongside published texts, gives valuable insight into how these women operated as professionals inside and outside the museum.